

BOOK REVIEWS – BULLETIN BIBLIOGRAPHIQUE

Juliette J. DAY, *Reading the Liturgy: An Exploration of Texts in Christian Worship* (London: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2014) 192 p. ISBN 978-0-5670-6335-9. \$26.99.

In her first monograph, *Reading the Liturgy*, Juliette J. Day offers a very good introduction for those who wish to study liturgy from linguistic and literary perspectives. Day is a lecturer in Church History at the University of Helsinki and Senior Research Fellow in Liturgy at Blackfriars Hall, University of Oxford. The subtitle of the book, 'An Exploration of Texts in Christian Worship' gives the impression that it deals with a detailed textual analysis or euchological study of liturgical texts. Instead, Day provides a general but scholarly overview of the nature and characteristic elements of printed texts used in worship events.

The purposes of the book are to draw attention to the role of texts in liturgical contexts and worship events and to investigate the functions of their textuality in liturgical acts. Day also examines how the very textuality of liturgical books generates a particular type of meaning-making independent of the ritual context. In eight chapters, the author investigates the different aspects of textuality which are implicit in the production and use of liturgical texts. She applies carefully gathered insights from contemporary literary, linguistic, and philosophical theories to specific historic and modern liturgical texts and scholarship. Instead of looking into the meaning of the text, Day focuses on the textual aspects of liturgical texts, that is, *not what they say but how they say it*.

The first chapter of the book discusses the nature of the liturgical text in relation to its historical development and in light of contemporary philosophical and literary studies. The role of the author of the liturgical text in the liturgical context is examined in the second chapter. Day contends that authorial intention plays a limited role in determining the meaning of a liturgical text. In her view, the reader/worshipper should not be constrained by intentional meaning when making its significance (p. 40). After dealing with textuality and authorship, Day proceeds to argue that in liturgical worship, the truly archaic and therefore traditional feature is genre, not language (p. 54). So in the third chapter, Day joins with John Frow to affirm that a genre conveys more information than that carried by the thematic content. She states that it is necessary to understand the function of liturgical genre to understand the processes of text production and interpretation. The

fourth chapter explores how the different elements of narrative are present in liturgical texts. Here, Day effectively demonstrates this presence through a narrative reading of one of the Eucharistic prayers taken from *Common Worship: Services and Prayers* of the Church of England and used at the feast of Ascension.

In the fifth chapter of her book, the author reflects upon intertextuality of liturgical texts and illustrates with suitable examples of prayers. The analysis of a biblical allusion in a collect taken from *Common Worship* displays Day's skill at establishing the argument (pp. 97-98). She declares that identifying the presence of an intertext by worshipers during prayer would help them to situate it in another narrative which enlightens their self-perception. Day notes that the dominant source text in liturgical texts is the Bible and she fears that the decline of biblical literacy in contemporary worship communities may result in divergence of authorial intention and worshippers' interpretation of the texts. The sixth chapter closely looks at the function of language in liturgical events and in the adoption of specific linguistic features in distinctive contexts of worship. Day also discusses the notion of style in relation to liturgical texts. She points out that the language of liturgical worship will always and necessarily be out of step with contemporary speech patterns and idiomatic use. Nevertheless, she finds these concessions less problematic as long as the criteria of edification, comprehensibility, and participation are not compromised (p. 121).

The seventh chapter unfolds the complexity of liturgical texts loaded with paratextual elements. The role of paratextual elements is explored in an exemplary way in this chapter, noting that the book of *Common Worship* contains a number of features of textbooks and reference books. The last chapter uncovers the thesis of the book. She states that in this book, "another way of approaching the meaning of worship is proposed, which is that the text in the worshippers' hands will reveal meaning through its textuality and that this either disregards or supplements the semantic content and ritual context" (p. 161). Day succeeds in highlighting the function of liturgical texts in worship contexts. The text used in worship has an essential role in facilitating the effects of liturgy such as reconciliation between God and humanity. Day suggests that the term *threshold* best describes the true function of the text. She concludes that liturgical text is a threshold of worship events which permeates and permits the transition of worshippers through them into God's presence. This presence restores the image and likeness of God in them during liturgy.

As the author intends, this book is certain to promote further scholarly and pastoral discussions about liturgical hermeneutics as well as a methodological paradigm for liturgical studies, inspiring students and researchers of liturgy. Liturgical scholars may find this book beneficial since it evokes a new perspective on the function of liturgical texts in worship contexts. In one hundred and sixty five pages, the author provides rich information in rather simple language and clear structure which are even comprehensible to beginners. The bibliographical references and index added to the book aid quick reference and increase the academic quality of the book. This book is easy to read and presents a logical array of arguments, and historical and philosophical insights are carefully used to substantiate the ideas of the author. Day's book invites readers to reflect on the ways they use printed materials in worship and on the significance of these materials in liturgical

participation. Readers may take up the printed text/book during worship with a new approach to the prayer text, being more aware of the language and words used in it.

The real meaning of the liturgical text is extracted primarily in worship contexts, by the actual and repeated participation in worship using the text. Liturgical texts are mere physical objects unless they are used in a worshipping community. This book substantiates that the meaning conveyed through the printed texts of worship events plays a significant role in the full, conscious, and active participation of the worshippers. More to the point, as Day's book reveals, since liturgical texts are *thresholds* of worship, more attention is to be paid in the selection and use of texts for worship.

Maryann Madhavathu

David W. FAGERBERG, *On Liturgical Asceticism* (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 2013) xix-246 p. ISBN 978-0-8132-2117-5. \$29.95.

This monograph is an excellent attempt of the author to present his evolved understanding of the connection between liturgy and theology. David W. Fagerberg, who is proud of being part of "the Schmemmann-Kavanagh school of liturgical theology" (p. ix of preface), continues to elaborate the supposition that liturgy is primary theology and that it is the ontological condition for theology. The title of the book is a grateful tribute to Fr. Aidan Kavanagh, who published a book entitled *On Liturgical Theology* (p. x). Fagerberg's first book, *What Is Liturgical Theology*, published in 1992, had analyzed the connection between liturgy and theology. Later he found that certain misunderstandings about the nature of liturgical theology were caused by overlooking its ascetical dimension. In the present book he tries to remedy this drawback by closely examining the role of asceticism in liturgical theology. The book contains an appendix entitled *A century on Liturgical Asceticism*, which is the embryonic form of this book. Without a doubt, this book is the result of a long journey, and this 'embryonic form' was a decisive moment in the whole process. At the same time it provides a summary of the thoughts elaborated in the book.

Throughout this book, Fagerberg develops Schmemmann's idea that liturgical theology is the reintegration of liturgy, theology, and piety. Instead of piety, the author prefers to use the term asceticism. His main argument is that the asceticism, which is "essential to the Christian life is also essential for understanding liturgy and theology" (p. xiv). The aim of the author is to discover and unfold the theological rationale behind liturgical asceticism. He enunciates that "liturgy without asceticism and theology is a species of ritual studies; asceticism without liturgy and theology is athletic or philosophical training; theology without liturgy and asceticism is an academic discipline in higher education" (p. 10).

The overall argument of the author is logically developed in six chapters without any subdivisions or subheadings inside. This structure makes a slightly slow reading of the book. I would have welcomed a redistribution of the details under different sections in each chapter. The introductory chapter defines liturgical asceticism. In this chapter, Fagerberg builds up a functional definition of liturgy:

“liturgy is the Trinity’s *perichoresis* kenotically extended to invite our synergistic ascent into deification” (p. 9). He argues that this definition of liturgy demands asceticism. Liturgical asceticism is different from mere ascetical or disciplinary practices by its purpose or *telos*. On pages 10-12 of the book the author lists nine statements, each of which could be taken as thesis statement of the book. He wishes to explore these statements confirming the tradition which naturally and necessarily held liturgy, theology, and asceticism together.

The second chapter describes the passions (*pathè*) or disordered desires. They are to be overcome to fulfill the liturgical vocation of humans to be in filial communion with God the Father. In order to fulfill that vocation of humans in the world, i.e. to become priests, ascetical discipline is necessary given the current sinful state of humankind. Fagerberg says that asceticism has nothing to do with dualism. Since the human being was created to be a liturgist or, as he calls them in the wake of Schmemmann, *homo adorans*, a discipline (*askèsis*) which leads to dispassion (*apatheia*) is required. For that is the only way to restore the anthropological potential lost due to the Fall.

In the third chapter Fagerberg explains the prescribed strategies for resisting those passions. The purpose of ascetical exercises is “the training of love, correctly oriented and properly intense” (p. 67). In his opinion, “the kenosis of God is the basis of liturgical asceticism.” In this chapter he further defines liturgical asceticism as “the synergistic response to grace’s presence” and describes grace as the engine of liturgical asceticism (p. 77). Again it is called the “preemptive mortification” and “imitation of Christ” beginning with imitating Christ’s death (p. 101). Obviously, liturgical asceticism leads to the fullness of life by dying (and rising) with Christ, i.e. by participating in the paschal mystery of Christ.

The fourth chapter illustrates a righteous and dispassionate person (*apatheia*) who has reached the goal of asceticism. The author proposes that “liturgical asceticism is liturgical realignment” (p. 130). *Apatheia* means to be reoriented to God because the passions had turned humans away from God. Fagerberg concludes that liturgy is the locus of *askèsis* just as liturgy is the locus for theology. The ultimate goal of liturgical asceticism is deification, which requires emptying oneself of the passions.

In the fifth chapter, the author presents asceticism as an obligation for all baptized Christians. He discusses above all the distinction between the monk and the ordinary Christian. Fagerberg affirms that all Christians are called to be ascetics though not all are called to be monks. A ‘secular’ Christian is called to holiness through asceticism. According to him, liturgical asceticism is incumbent on all Christians. He borrows the term ‘laic’ from Nicholas Afanasiev’s neologism, which identifies the lay person by a positive definition. The word “lay” originates from the old French “lai.” It means “secular” and was used for any non-expert in a certain field. The laypeople are also known as “laity” which finds its root from the Latin “laicus”, or the Greek “laikos.” This term means “of the people” or “common” (“laos” means people). However, the term “laic” was coined as an analogy to the term ‘cleric’. Fagerberg uses this term to call the baptized, who are initiated, into a sacred order as liturgists to celebrate the Divine Liturgy (p. 134).

The sixth chapter tries to demonstrate the face of the sanctified ascetic in the icons and establishes Mary as the supreme liturgical person. The face of asceticism

is perceived in the icons of saints. Furthermore, the author repeats the idea that liturgical asceticism is equivalent to being conformed to Christ. In other words, human souls become an image of God, which is made possible by the hypostatic union in the incarnation. Finally, Fagerberg asserts that liturgy, theology, and asceticism interpenetrate. When the three are connected at the molecular level, asceticism is more than morality, theology is more than a human science, and liturgy is more than religious ceremony. He concludes his work with the necessity of keeping a fruitful tension between these three. He finds their integrated harmony in the saints and their icons as well as in Mary as liturgical person (p. 163).

Fagerberg largely depends on the Eastern orthodox tradition of asceticism and the book is overflowing with quotes and stories of the Church Fathers and desert monks. He clarifies his arguments by using incidents and narratives from the life of these ascetic people. Sometimes the reader feels lost and misses the flow of logical arguments in the abundance of quotations and descriptions. However, Fagerberg's merit is that he integrates Eastern ascetical reflections very well with recent Western ideas. Reading his book nourishes one's spiritual life. Meanwhile, the content of the book challenges all those theological endeavors which move solely in an academic direction and neglect the essential aspects of prayer and asceticism.

One concern about the book is the possibility of a kind of neglect by academic theologians. They may find the subject matter of this book not highly academic but spiritual. Nevertheless, *On Liturgical Asceticism* provides the reader with a better and clear understanding of liturgical theology with a deep, systematic, and scholarly arrangement of material to substantiate the concept of liturgical asceticism. In sum, this book is a must-read for all those who are engaged with liturgy, theology, or liturgical theology.

Maryann Madhavathu

Timothy P. O'Malley. *Liturgy and the New Evangelization: Practicing the Art of Self-Giving Love* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2014) 166 p. ISBN 978-0-8146-3764-7. \$16.95.

Central to *Liturgy and the New Evangelization* is the conviction that liturgy itself evangelizes. Liturgy is not a mere ceremonial, decorative supplement to the Church's "serious" activities. It is the source and the summit of the ecclesial life, as *Sacrosanctum Concilium* proclaims. O'Malley's liturgical implications seem to be well in line with this Council's interpretation of the Church's communal act of worship. A specialist in the field of liturgical and sacramental theology, Notre Dame's assistant professional specialist, and a current director of its Center for Liturgy, O'Malley elegantly weaves together notions of liturgy and (new) evangelization. While the connection between the two seems to be theologically justifiable and perhaps even obvious, the attention given to the topic within academic circles is rather scarce, if not entirely absent. Scholarly initiatives addressing the need for the liturgical adaptation to constantly changing cultural contexts are plentiful, but *Liturgy and the New Evangelization* chooses to treat a subject matter

from a different angle. The book seeks to establish an argument in favor of a theological and liturgical analysis of the new evangelization, which in fact places it in continuity with the agendas of the Liturgical Movement and Vatican II.

O'Malley unfolds his thesis in five chapters. He first provides a liturgical examination of a number of Church documents (*Evangelii Nuntiandi*, *Catechesi Tradendae*, *General Directory for Catechesis*, and *Sacrosanctum Concilium*) which address the topic of evangelization. On the basis of his reading, he concludes that liturgy is a "privileged performance of evangelization, one in which our humanity comes to experience the reality of God through visible signs" (24). O'Malley challenges the cliché perceptions of evangelization as a proselytizing activity and of liturgy as a world-unrelated activity.

The second chapter treats the notion of the new evangelization as the Church's search for renewal within the contemporary context. The book addresses in detail the phenomenon of American secularization and the rise of moralistic therapeutic deism as its prominent feature. O'Malley postulates that liturgical experience can become a platform for purifying the American secular imagination of a deceptive vision of God, the self, and the world.

In the third chapter, the author discusses the sacramental and evangelical potentials of liturgical homily and challenges an inaccurate perception of a sermon as "an opportunity for informal discourse within the liturgy" (57). O'Malley offers five suggestions for the homilist to practice in order to promote the effectiveness of the message proclaimed. He deems the act of liturgical preaching to be central for founding a community of people educated in the rhetoric of God's love.

The fourth chapter is dedicated to the theme of Christian discernment and the place of liturgy within it. Following McIntosh, the author accentuates the need for formation of the discerning subject that can be skilled in practical wisdom and immersed in sacramental praxis. According to O'Malley, liturgy provides the best platform for growing into a capable discerning individual. The Eucharist shifts the community's focus from the question of what the participants are to do with their lives to the question of "what [their] lives are to become" (106).

In the last chapter, the author turns to the parish and argues for the need of its more conscious engagement with the world. He concurs that local communities, formed and transformed through liturgical experiences, are well equipped for sharing God's self-giving love with people outside the church walls.

While noticeably theological in its scope and orientation, the book is far from abstract in argumentation - which is undeniably one of its strength. The text abounds with practical observations and innovative proposals with regard to the evangelical nature of liturgy. For example, O'Malley provides an analysis of the Eucharistic prayer in all its eight components and demonstrates the rite's existential, transformative relevance. When absorbed into the Eucharistic imagination, O'Malley believes, human narratives and everyday activities are refashioned in light of the liturgical experience of God's kenotic self-giving. By a similar logic, liturgy has a potential to reform human speech, to enrich secular culture's "impoverished religious imagination," and, by its beauty, to humanize societies. Concerning the latter, O'Malley offers a rather intriguing reflection. He states that those parishes which engage themselves with the beauty of liturgical performance do not waste their time and energy on a non-pragmatic enterprise. Liturgical

beauty, O'Malley contends, evangelizes and thus humanizes because of its quality of bringing people into communion with the living God. Within such a paradigm, one can hardly fail to notice the importance of the aesthetic dimension of the liturgical celebration. One of the obstacles of effective evangelization, then, is the limiting of liturgical rites and prayers to the sole task of transmission of doctrinal data, to the detriment of liturgy's aesthetic.

Timothy O'Malley is a young scholar, but he is definitely not a newcomer to the field of liturgical studies. What is distinctive in his emerging scholarship is his focus on the liturgical foundations of the new evangelization. Whereas the call to new evangelization dates back to the pontificate of John Paul II, the avenues of creative, scholarly interactions between liturgy itself (not theologies about liturgy) and the new evangelization are nonetheless uncultivated. O'Malley's *Liturgy and the New Evangelization* seems to be a unique scholarly contribution in that regard. The volume's initial incentives are, however, to be further complemented by an in-depth research which should also combine the expertise of missiologists, systematic theologians, philosophers and social science scholars, among others. Given O'Malley's focus on the American religious situation, the book does not embrace a broader cultural spectrum, but neither was it the author's original intention. Hence, the question whether O'Malley's conclusions with regard to liturgical evangelization apply to different cultural and political contexts remains open.

Liturgy and the New Evangelization is without hesitation a subtle and thoughtful delving into the liturgical experience of the Church in its individual, communal, existential, and cosmic dimensions. Written in a cordial and personal manner, it invites the readers, lay and academic alike, to a greater appreciation of God's outpouring love manifest in liturgy, likewise kindling a desire to share this love with others.

Victoria Lebzyak

J. REGO, *El bosque simbólico. Itinerarios para una reflexión sobre la acción sacramental* (Rome: Edizioni Liturgiche – Centro Liturgico Vicenziano, 2012).

L'ouvrage se propose d'ouvrir des chemins de compréhension et itinéraires de développement du discours sacramental dans la «forêt symbolique», c'est-à-dire dans le contexte des enquêtes anthropologiques et herméneutiques sur les actions symboliques humaines. En ce sens, l'ouvrage reconnaît l'importance contextuelle et interdisciplinaire d'une retraduction ajournée des catégories classiques pour dire l'événement sacramental chrétien, dans le passage et du signe au symbole et de la métaphysique au symbolique.

L'ouvrage prend comme point de départ et comme référence les propositions de Romano Guardini sur l'action symbolique pour poursuivre avec l'étude des perspectives liturgiques et sacramentaires de Casel, Schillebeeckx, Rahner et Chauvet, parmi d'autres. Un aspect intéressant à remarquer c'est l'étude des racines romantiques du symbole (J. W. Goethe), une donnée souvent oubliée par les recherches plus récentes. Très positif encore c'est la détermination des nœuds pro-

blématiques, notamment sur le plan épistémologique, de la médiation et de l'efficacité sacramentelles, ainsi que la reconnaissance du caractère multidisciplinaire du discours symbolique. L'ouvrage s'achève avec un effort de relecture de l'horizon de compréhension de l'action symbolique à partir d'une vision unitaire de la *Summa Theologiae* de Saint Thomas dans le sens de la récupération d'une «rationalité pratique» qui doit se laisser inspirer par les «vertus» et, donc, se traduire en des actions rituelles «vertueuses».

Si le projet semble d'intérêt, il donne lieu cependant à certaines perplexités. D'abord, on ne voit pas très clairement le lien entre la proposition finale et les acquis du parcours précédent. La thèse finale risque, alors, de paraître extrinsèque au sujet lui-même, car l'auteur semble finalement renoncer à la rationalité symbolique en faveur de la rationalité de la pratique vertueuse, alors que l'attention pourrait se concentrer sur le potentiel pratique et «vertueux» du symbole. De plus, la reconnaissance de la vertu comme principe de l'action est déjà le résultat d'un vécu religieux et symbolique et non pas seulement sa cause. En ce sens, le besoin d'une aide extérieure de la grâce ou de l'Esprit-Saint met en relief la faiblesse et la contradiction de la perspective car le problème le plus profond de la médiation sacramentelle est précisément le problème du caractère extrinsèque de l'action divine par rapport à la découverte du caractère «trop humain» des rites religieux. On se demande, alors, s'il n'y aurait pas à rechercher, à côté du réveil romantique idéaliste, les racines antimétaphysiques de l'intérêt par les symboles, les rites, le jeu, la fête, et donc aussi le rapport du symbole à une vision «dionysiaque» du monde (Nietzsche). Cela ouvrirait éventuellement vers une vision plus complexe du symbole ainsi que de la «rationalité» de l'action rituelle, caractérisés non pas exactement, ni unilatéralement, par la «vertu» ou, à l'inverse, par la «folie», mais par l'interruption de la vertu par la folie ainsi que par l'interruption de la fête par le compromis, moyennant l'inversion comique de l'ordre du monde sérieux et la subversion éthique du plaisir et de la jouissance. S'il est vrai que le sacrement chrétien est attaché à la mort de Jésus sur la croix, il n'est pas moins vrai que le caractère esthétique de ce lien nous protège de la brutalité de l'événement originaire, autrement dit: le sacrement est la version ludique de l'action sérieuse (l'image de la réalité ou le signe-cause de la grâce donnée «d'une fois pour toutes» dans la liberté de Jésus...) qui nous permet d'y accéder et participer sans mourir. Une lecture plus attentive de Romano Guardini aurait mis l'auteur sur cette voie.

Ángelo Cardita